

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

A. General:

1. Claims 3, 6, and 15 have been amended by being rewritten in independent form to include all the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims and, therefore, per the Examiner, should now be allowable together with all the claims which depend therefrom. Claim 7 has been rewritten in independent form to include the base claim (claim 1 - there were no intervening claims) plus language reciting a magnetic write head to mark the tape in order to track the sample; support is found in the specification, paragraphs [0051]-[0052]. Claims 8, 9, 12, and 13 have been amended to make them each multiply dependent from claims 3, 6, 7, and 15.

2. Claims 25-28 have been added. Claims 25 and 26 recite different embodiments for ensuring that the tape does not deflect/deform when received at the sealable opening of the mass spectrometer; support is found in the specification, paragraph [0062]. Claims 27 and 28 recite embodiments for ensuring that the tape containing samples can be stored and analyzed later without cross contamination between samples; support is found in the specification, paragraphs [0047]-[0048].

3. Claims 1, 2, and 14 have been canceled.

4. Claims 3-13 and 15-28 remain in the application.

B. Claim Objections:

The Examiner has objected to claims 1, 14, 17 and 18 due to various informalities (typographical errors). However, after careful review, Applicant cannot find the informalities cited by the Examiner and, therefore, respectfully requests that these objections be withdrawn.

C. **103 Rejections:**

1. The Examiner has rejected claims 1, 2, 7, 14, 16, 18 and 21 under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over Wechsung (USPN 4,296,322) in view of Fisher (USPN 4,819,477).

As noted above, Applicant has canceled claims 1, 2, and 14 thus obviating this rejection as to them. Applicant has amended claim 15 by rewriting it in independent form to include the base claim and all intervening claims, thus, per the Examiner making claim 15 allowable. Since claims 16, 18, and 21 all depend ultimately from claim 15, they are allowable as well. Claim 7 has been rewritten to include the language from claim 1 plus language reciting a magnetic write head for marking the tape in order to track the sample deposited thereon between the collection point and the mass spectrometer. Because neither of the cited references discloses such a marking scheme, Applicant submits that claim 7 is allowable as well.

2. The Examiner has rejected claims 8-11 under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over Wechsung as applied to claim 1 and in further view of Ishiguro (USPN 4,757,396).

For the reasons cited above by Applicant that independent claims 3, 6, 7, and 15 are allowable, claims 8-11 which depend therefrom are, therefore, now also allowable, thus, obviating this rejection.

3. The Examiner has rejected claims 12, 13 and 23 under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over Wechsung as applied to claim 1 in view of Standing (USPN 5,376,788).

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Amdt dated 12/19/2003
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For the reasons cited above by Applicant that independent claims 3, 6, 7, and 15 are allowable, claims 12, 13, and 23 which depend therefrom are, therefore, now also allowable, thus, obviating this rejection.

D. Conclusion:

In view of the above, Applicants submit that each of the presently pending claims in this application is in immediate condition for allowance. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections are requested. Allowance of claims 3-13 and 14-28 at an early date is solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

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